

## OUR ASSUMPTIVE WORLD

Our past experiences with other people color the way in which we experience people in our present lives. The extent to which we are unaware of the feelings, attitudes and impulses we have had towards people in our past, is the extent to which we will unconsciously transfer these same feelings, attitudes and impulses on to people in our present lives. We are especially likely to transfer feelings we had for particularly powerful people, such as our parents. This results in faulty assumptions and distorted reality. For example, if I grew up in a family where there was a great deal of pain, I might see the world through a pair of blue tinted glasses. I might assume that a lot of things that are really other colors are blue (or green, or purple .....). If I grew up in a family where the predominant belief and way of dealing with life was denial, I am probably seeing the world through a pair of rose colored glasses. I may assume that things that are other colors have a rosy glow to them. We make assumptions based on past experience.

### **Transference**

In the psychological world, this is what is known as transference - the displacement of feelings, attitudes or impulses experienced toward previous figures in a client's life on to current figures (namely the psychologist) to whom they do not realistically apply. This is the very essence of the therapeutic process - this is where the client get's aware if we deal with the transference with clarity instead of defensiveness or false assumptions. If we do we join in a macabre dance of defense with the client. If we don't, our way of relating becomes a corrective experience.

### **Countertransference**

Countertransference refers to the way in which the therapist may be making assumptions about or having feelings about the client based on old experiences. These inappropriate or irrational reactions by a therapist to a patient's behavior represent displacements by the therapist, on to the patient, of thoughts, feelings and impulses that are not justified in reality by anything the patient has said or done.

Transference and countertransference are present to some extent in all interpersonal relationships, since the reactions of one person to another are always subject to the influence of prior interpersonal experiences. It will be present in the interviewer/interviewee relationship.

### **Misinterpretations**

The possibility of misinterpreting another persons behavior and making false assumptions and interpretations is increased to the extent we are unaware of ourselves, our past and the color of the glasses that we wear. The possibility of misinterpreting our own behavior is greater to the extent we are unaware of our motivations, past experiences and what they meant, the connection between past and present and the connection between our feelings, thoughts and behaviors. *Unfortunately we do not know when we are making false assumptions because it is a process that is out of consciousness. For this reason it is imperative that we are committed to the process of becoming more self aware. Growth happens when we:*

- are curious about ourselves
- ask questions about our own inner feelings, thoughts and impulses
- examine our motivations and reactions
- have the humility to be vigilant to the possibility of our own insanity of not being in touch with Reality, and are imposing our personal reality on to others.

